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SUBJECT: RUSSIAN MILITARY NEWSPAPER ASSERTS MOSCOW'S RIGHT
EXCLUSIVELY TO DOMINATE CENTRAL ASIA

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¶1. SUMMARY: A seminal July 25 analytical article in Russia's official military newspaper asserts Russia's right to dominate Central Asia and to prevent the United States and NATO - "[Russia's] traditional geopolitical rivals" - from any sort of further military presence in the region. The article ignores Turkmenistan, but states that Kazakhstan, though rich enough to attempt an independent foreign policy, is reliably in the Kremlin camp; Uzbekistan is now Russia's because of rigid U.S. human rights ideology; Kyrgyzstan is coming to its senses and knows who butters which side of its bread, especially because of American spies from Embassy Bishkek working to undermine President Bakiyev's government; and Tajikistan owes its existence and its current leaders solely to Russia. This is not "black propaganda," like usually appears in the Russian press: it's a mostly sober political analysis and policy assertion.
END SUMMARY.

¶2. From time to time, Post has reported examples of Russian disinformation and "black propaganda" that floods the Central Asian information space. This article (full text in para four below) from the official Russian military newspaper, "Krasnaya Zvezda" ["Red Star"], is qualitatively different from previous examples because it is a relatively sober analysis that asserts, country by country (except for Turkmenistan) how much Moscow "owns" Central Asia, and what remains to be done to sew it up for good. Embassy Dushanbe suggests it is important that U.S. Posts in the former Soviet Union, Washington analysts, and other addressees, be aware of this important article.

¶3. The article, with the byline Vladimir Mokhov interviewing pundit Andrei Grozin and headlined "Asia is Subtle," was published July 25. It asserts, "Central Asian states are still within the orbit of Russia's political, military-political, and economic influence. And Russia must not stop there; it needs to continue building up its influence in all the areas of

activity." The author asserts the following:

KAZAKHASTAN: Because the country is rich and has \$11 billion in U.S. foreign investment, it can afford to attempt a balanced foreign policy; but, in fact, Nazarbayev is reliably in the Kremlin's camp.

TAJIKISTAN: President Emomali Rahmonov's attempt to pursue a Tajik version of multi-directional ["open-door"] foreign policy isn't very far-sighted. In terms of its economic, demographic, intellectual, defensive, and other resources, Tajikistan is nowhere near equal to Kazakhstan. It's a much more vulnerable and less self-sufficient state. In the final analysis, Tajikistan owes its existence - within its current borders and with its current political elites - entirely to Russia. (COMMENT: Dushanbe, which closely monitors the Russian press, will see this as an assertion that President Rahmonov serves at the pleasure of the Kremlin. END COMMENT.)

UZBEKISTAN: [When] the West started portraying Karimov as some sort of "mad dog," Russian companies and politicians gained a window of opportunity for expanding cooperation with Uzbekistan.

KYRGYZSTAN: The Bishkek government's statement announcing the expulsion of two U.S. diplomats says plainly this decision was made on the basis of intelligence reports from the Kyrgyz special services, which repeatedly caught the Americans interfering in Kyrgyzstan's internal affairs. According to some accounts, they were establishing a spy network in southern Kyrgyzstan, where Kyrgyz intelligence predicts an outbreak of radical activity at the end of this summer. Although the U.S. Embassy in Kyrgyzstan has denied all allegations, there's obviously no smoke without fire.

CONCLUSION: Central Asian states are still within the orbit of Russia's political, military-political, and economic influence. And Russia must not stop there: it needs to continue building up its influence in all areas of activity. One reason to do this

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is to minimize the possibility of any further American military facilities being established in Central Asia, whatever they may be called: training centers for local military personnel, points for monitoring the Afghanistan drug-trafficking situation, or anything else. One way or another, they would be military facilities controlled by the United States or NATO - our traditional geopolitical rivals.

14. BEGIN TEXT:

The United States has completely abandoned its plans for a strategic partnership with Uzbekistan. Washington now describes the regime there as unacceptable and "undemocratic." The White House does not consider it necessary to engage in dialogue or bridge-building with the Uzbek regime; moreover, it expects that regime to be replaced as a result of socio-political upheavals.

Uzbekistan has not lived up to the expectations of the US State Department and the Pentagon. But was it ever capable of doing so?

Andrei Grozin, head of the Central Asia and Kazakhstan department at the CIS Countries Institute: "Clearly, after what happened in Andijan in May of 2005, American strategists decided that Uzbekistan was dependent on them, so it could be pressured into agreeing to an 'international investigation' into the tragic Andijan events - thus bringing the Uzbek administration entirely under American control, or at least giving the United States substantial leverage."

But President Islam Karimov refused to give in to pressure. Instead, he learned some appropriate lessons from what had happened. The Andijan events could hardly be described as another "revolution" in the former Soviet Union. This was more like an armed uprising in one particular city, with the prospect of instability spreading to adjacent cities and the entire Ferghana Valley. If the first and second phases of the Ferghana

Valley power-grab attempt had succeeded, the rebels could have escalated the situation and overthrown the existing political regime, or at least attempted to proclaim some sort of independent state formation in the Ferghana Valley.

In contrast to the West, Moscow and Beijing understood this - and in general, they did not condemn the resolute measures used to crush the revolt. Russia, for example, behaved quite rationally under the circumstances. By refraining from any active involvement, and accepting the Tashkent government's official account of events in Andijan, we not only maintained good relations with Karimov, but actually strengthened that relationship. What's more, while the West started portraying Karimov as some sort of "mad dog," Russian companies and politicians gained a window of opportunity for expanding cooperation with Uzbekistan.

These opportunities have been developed successfully, as confirmed by Uzbekistan's decision to renew its membership of the CIS Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the gradual change in Tashkent's foreign policy priorities as it has re-entered Russia's sphere of influence. By the end of this year, Uzbekistan will have joined the dozens of agreements within the Euro-Asian Economic Community framework. Another logical development has been Uzbekistan's official request for Washington to withdraw its troops and hardware from the Khanabad airbase.

But the United States was thrown out of Uzbekistan so fast that American military experts and State Department officials had to rewrite their Central Asia strategy on the fly. This strategy cannot be implemented without some new allies in the region.

Washington is primarily focusing its attention on Kazakhstan and Tajikistan.

Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan, has been visited by many

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American officials over the past six months - including high-level officials like Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Energy Secretary Sam Bodin. Observers note that all of a sudden, as if by command, Washington officials have started expressing support for Kazakhstan's claims that it is a leader in the region. American officials had not been known to support such statements before. Over the years of Kazakhstan's independence, the United States has invested just over \$11 billion there - primarily in hydrocarbon production. American transnational corporations hold very strong positions in Kazakhstan, stronger than in any other post-Soviet state in Central Asia.

Note that none of the above applied to Uzbekistan. Of course, Tashkent was initially promised a great deal of investment, but this never materialized. American business projects in Uzbekistan weren't very large or substantial; they mostly concerned gold-mining, uranium-mining, and some other raw materials projects.

Andrei Grozin: "The situation is completely different in Kazakhstan. In economic and investment terms, it is very dependent on the United States - much more than Uzbekistan was. After all, Kazakhstan's economy has been reformed to a far greater extent, and is more liberal. Consequently, it has long been tied to world energy markets, and that makes it far more vulnerable."

So President Nursultan Nazarbayev, who has consistently pursued a multi-directional foreign policy, finds it absolutely essential to maintain good relations with all of his large and influential neighbors, especially China and Russia, as well as with the West, especially the United States. Thus, on the one hand, Kazakhstan has recently decided to participate in the overtly anti-Russian Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline project. On the other hand, when Nazarbayev attended the G8 summit in his capacity as CIS chairman, Kazakhstan agreed to sign a number of

major energy project deals with Russia. The CIS Countries Institute maintains that Kazakhstan has always balanced on the boundary of the interests of various other countries, and seems likely to continue this policy.

That applies to defense as well. Kazakhstan can probably be described as Russia's most consistent Central Asian ally in defense cooperation, participating actively in all CSTO measures - just as actively as it participates in NATO's Partnership for Peace.

Astana doesn't reject Western aid either. The United States, for example, is spending substantial sums on infrastructure for Kazakhstan's marines on the shore of the Caspian Sea. The very same Kazakhstan battalion, now a brigade, has been equipped by the Americans and uses the Hummers they donated. Only the artillery is still Soviet- or Russian-made.

Tajikistan was the main target of US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's visit to the region. The Americans make no secret of their vital interest in air corridors over Tajikistan and refuelling rights there. So there was some discussion of a substantial increase in NATO flights over Tajik territory, and allocating another airfield for NATO there.

The Tajik government in Dushanbe is interested in additional revenues for its scanty budget - in the form of plentiful American dollars. Tajikistan is willing to take full advantage of its key geostrategic location in Central Asia. Moreover, Tajikistan fully approves of everything the Americans are doing in Afghanistan. The American presence there reduces the danger of terrorism from the south, allowing Tajikistan to get on with fortifying the Tajik-Afghan border. So Dushanbe's readiness to respond to Washington's requests has more to do with simply wanting to make money, rather than adopting a multi-directional foreign policy course. Tajikistan hasn't found any other

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money-making opportunities so far. This seems to be the sole explanation for current American-Tajik cooperation.

Some experts maintain that Tajikistan is talking of a multi-directional foreign policy partly because its hopes of attracting substantial investment from Russia haven't yet been fulfilled. So this is a way of putting pressure on Russian companies which have discussed plans for a number of major projects in Tajikistan. Chief among these companies is RAO Unified Energy Systems (RAO UES).

Andrei Grozin: "But Anatoly Chubais's company has some equally large projects in Kyrgyzstan. Thus, in my view, there's obviously some bargaining going on here - these two post-Soviet republics have a monopoly on water resources in Central Asia, and it's a question of deciding which one of them will be the priority partner."

It's no secret that some of America's intellectual elite have been floating the idea of a "Greater Central Asia" project over the past six months. When Rumsfeld visited Dushanbe, he noted once again that there is a great deal of scope for energy projects in American-Tajik cooperation. American corporations could invest \$1.5-2 billion in these projects over the next few years. RAO UES CEO Anatoly Chubais was mentioning similar figures for potential Russian investment in Tajikistan. But the Tajiks seem more inclined to believe the Americans, rather than Chubais.

Russian border guards have left Tajikistan; Russia's 201st Division, which recently became a military base, has been asked to relocate from central Dushanbe to the outskirts. According to some observers, these developments indicate that Tajikistan is trying to distance itself from Russia, or at least show Russia its place, to some extent.

Andrei Grozin: "President Emomali Rakhmonov's attempt to pursue a Tajik version of multi-directional policy isn't very

far-sighted, in my view. In terms of its economic, demographic, intellectual, defensive, and other resources, Tajikistan is nowhere near equal to Kazakhstan. It's a much more vulnerable and less self-sufficient state. In the final analysis, Tajikistan owes its existence - within its current borders and with its current political elites - entirely to Russia."

One of the few post-Soviet states to resist American dominance is Kyrgyzstan. Washington has been somewhat annoyed by President Kurmanbek Bakiyev independent stance in deciding his foreign policy direction. This annoyance peaked when Bakiyev made a much-publicized statement about the presence of America's [former Uzbekistan] Khansi airbase being unwelcome in Kyrgyzstan. Some experts maintain that the statement was political: Kyrgyzstan's new administration wants to restrict Washington's influence on its domestic policy-making.

Observers link the same factor to Kyrgyzstan's recent expulsion of two American diplomats, declared personae non grata. The Kyrgyz Foreign Ministry's statement says plainly that this decision was made on the basis of intelligence reports from the Kyrgyz special services, which repeatedly caught the Americans interfering in Kyrgyzstan's internal affairs. According to some accounts, they were establishing a spy network in southern Kyrgyzstan, where Kyrgyz intelligence predicts an outbreak of radical activity at the end of this summer. Although the US Embassy in Kyrgyzstan has denied all allegations, there's obviously no smoke without fire.

This diplomatic scandal had a negative impact on American-Kyrgyz negotiations regarding terms for the Pentagon's lease on an airbase at the Manas International Airport. These talks have been under way for several months. The Americans will have to pay up - unless they want to lose their strategic bridgehead in Kyrgyzstan like they lost the one in Uzbekistan. Most likely,

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they'll also have to restrain their zeal in imposing the Western model of democracy on Kyrgyz society.

Andrei Grozin: "Kyrgyzstan's 'willfulness' is due to a combination of various factors. I get the impression that Kurmanbek Bakiyev is gradually bringing the situation in Kyrgyzstan under control. At any rate, the unrestrained lawlessness observed only six months ago - the bacchanalia that continued for a few months after the revolution - is now gone. The central authorities are gradually establishing control over unruly regions. Life is slowly returning to normal, more or less. The economy is doing relatively well, for a country which has experienced such cataclysms."

Kurmanbek Bakiyev's initial demand was \$200 million a year for use of the airbase. Obviously, the United States could easily afford that. It could afford much more. In principle, the Pentagon's budget would cover it. According to recent reports, the two sides seem to have agreed on \$150 million. One way or another, this is a lot of money for Kyrgyzstan, which is a fairly poor country, lacking minerals or other resources; it would amount to about a third of Kyrgyzstan's annual budget revenues. So the Kyrgyz government does have something to fight for.

Over the past 12-18 months, Russia has gone on the offensive in Central Asia. Compared to the preceding five years, the heights reached there by Gazprom, LUKoil, RAO UES, some defense enterprises, mobile communications operators, and even large retail networks show that our country is making a comeback to the region. But it's coming back as a reliable economic partner, not a politically dominant forces. As the economists put it: banks are better than tanks.

Andrei Grozin: "Central Asia is still dependent on Russia to a considerable extent. For this region our country means trade routes, a market for surplus labor, and a market for a substantial proportion of the raw materials that come from Central Asia, including exports across Russian territory."

But the "tanks" should not be overlooked either. Russia remains the leading supplier of arms and military hardware to Central Asian countries (some of it at concessional prices for members of the CSTO). The overwhelming majority of future officers are trained in Russia. For example, Kazakhstan has over 700 officer cadets studying at Russian military education institutions, while only about a hundred are studying in Western Europe and the United States. This is an obvious example of how closely Kazakhstan cooperates with the Russian Federation. In principle, the same can be said for other Central Asian states.

Moreover, there are the CSTO and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. There are associations within these influential international organizations: the Regional Anti-Terrorism Center (within the SCO) and the CSTO Regional Coalition Group in Central Asia. In other words, Central Asian states are still within the orbit of Russia's political, military-political, and economic influence. And Russia must not stop there; it needs to continue building up its influence in all the areas of activity.

One reason to do this is in order to minimize the possibility of any further American military facilities being established in Central Asia, whatever they may be called: training centers for local military personnel, points for monitoring the Afghanistan drug-trafficking situation, or anything else. One way or another, they would be military facilities controlled by the United States or NATO - our traditional geopolitical rivals.

END TEXT.
HOAGLAND